

**Erika Dickens**  
**Salutatorian**

*Daily Perspective Can Change Your Life*

Can one thought change your whole day? If you could make one simple decision to make each day great would you? It's quite easy; I promise you because it's all about your perspective. When you look back on a day you have to make a choice, you can dwell on the details that make each and every day bad or choose to look at the wealth of positive moments that occurred.

I have put a lot of thought in these statements over the past few years and also into one particular story and together they changed my life. As most of you know, I had a twin brother and his name was AJ. He was my best friend, and you could always find us zooming around the streets of Mount Vernon in his wheelchair or playing legos. When we were about six years old, he started to fall a lot and lose control of his legs. It was a very strange time because we had no idea why he would just fall at random moments throughout the day. Well, we later found out that my brother had Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy. This condition caused his muscles to quit working essentially, and it started in his lower legs. Later on, he had to start using a motorized wheelchair to get around as his muscles began to get weaker and weaker, and he struggled with many different things daily. For example, watching everyone else get to move and play, not being able to get his own food or grab a cup of water by himself when he needed it. He never showed that it was hard for him and not once did I ever hear him complain about any of it. There is one day in particular that really shows me how much perspective can have an impact on our lives, and it happened when we were twelve years old. My brother was playing legos as usual at the table and was talking to my mother. He said to her, "Mom I have never had a bad day." What? Did I hear this correctly? My mom told me the story and I had to stop and think for a second, "how could my brother who struggled the most out of anyone I knew have never had a bad day?" It took me until after he had passed away the next year to truly realize how he had never had a bad day. Those next few

years were tough, and they really taught me to redirect my thoughts about each day because AJ wasn't focusing on his legs never working or not being able to get in bed by himself. He even overlooked how he was unable to go to a lot of cool places or even to the mountains, things we take for granted, no he was able to forget all that because his focus was elsewhere. He saw the day as: I can be awake today, I can play with legos, I can have Tanner Way or Austin Cates come over to hang out, or at least I still have mobility in my arms. He was positive, and he saw each day for the good in it. I learned from him that no matter what life is going to throw my way I can get through it because of one simple fact, every SINGLE day has something worth appreciating.

This fact can be applied to many things in our lives, probably the greatest, most recent example is this year. We have had many disappointments in the past three months and everyone is going through something different. I think we can all agree it's sad that we have to end a senior year this way; however, we can't be upset with everything and stay absorbed in all these things that have got us down. There are many things in the past few months that I'm sure have been amazing, like getting to hang out with your friends more before we all have to start our lives, or even just hanging out with family. I know that I look back on all these days and even though they were sad that's not how I remember them. In my memory, this entire time has been wonderful. I got to hang out with my friends and family before I leave in a few days. I'm thankful I got to have a summer before I don't see them for a while. These times have proved to me even more that everyday is what you make it, your thoughts and perspective on a day.

If everyday is a choice why not choose to remember the good instead of dwelling on the negative moments. The little moments are sometimes the best so focus on those and not that you had a bad day at work or got in a fight with someone. People desire a full and happy life and some will say that comes with age, money, or fame. But I would argue against their case, to be happy is to choose to be happy, to be thankful for those little moments that have made the day hopeful or successful. And when you change your perspective on life and choose to be happy and remember the days for the good, you can live a life with no bad days!



**Taylor Hunt**



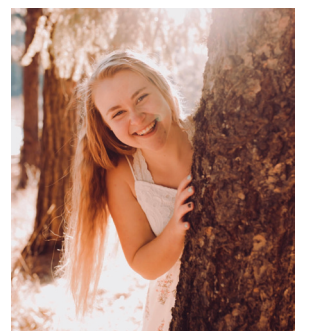
**Kohlten Jones**



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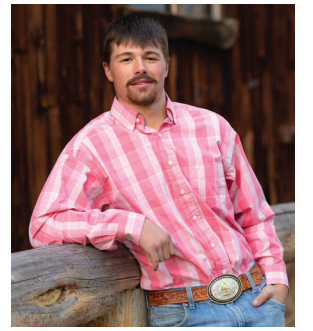
**Kyllian Moon**



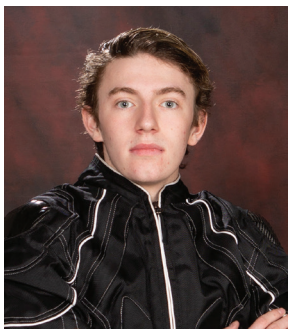
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**Elisha Sheedy**



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**Emilie Updegrave**



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**Cierra Wyllie**



**Damion Young**

Scholar Athlete - **Tiler Voigt, Drew Lusco**

OASSA Students of Merit - **Erika Dickens (Science, Math, Business/Marketing), Frank Douglas (PE/Health), Drew Lusco (Social Science), Warner Robertson (Industrial Arts/Vocational Ag), Ellie Justice (Performing Arts)**

School Citizenship Awards - **Erika Dickens, Taylor Hunt**

School Activities Award - **Ellie Justice**

Principal's Leadership Award - **Drew Lusco**

OSAA Oregon Scholar Athlete - **Drew Lusco, Erika Dickens, Donovan Smith, Gage Brandon, Ellie Justice, Samantha Floyd, Tiler Voigt, Emily Springer**

Gold Club - **Taylor Hunt, Russell Hodge, Drew Lusco, Mason Gerry, Kaytlyn Wells**